

THE  
**FUTURE**  
OF  
**AMERICA'S**  
**NATIONAL**  
**PARKS**

First Annual  
Centennial Strategy for

# Martin Van Buren National Historic Site

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



**Site:** MAVA

**Year:** 2007

**Vision Statement**

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site was established in 1974 to preserve in public ownership a significant property associated with Martin Van Buren, eighth president of the United States. The park preserves Lindenwald, a fully restored historic house, and 22 acres of the original 250-acre farm in Kinderhook NY owned and occupied by Van Buren from the end of his presidency in 1841 to his death in 1862. Lindenwald and its cultural landscape reflect the life and times of Martin Van Buren, a prominent antebellum politician who helped shape the American political party system in its formative years and during the turbulent era preceding the Civil War.

Several recent opportunities coincide nicely with the Centennial Initiative vision of what the park will be in 2016. These will bring an end to makeshift facilities in use since the park's 1974 creation and will provide visitor access to Van Buren's farm for the first time.

Work began in 2007 on the park's first General Management Plan providing a fresh start to ensure that the decisions will carry out the park's mission and the five goals of the Centennial Initiative

A proposed boundary adjustment that includes 174 acres in land and easement donations will protect and provide visitor access to nationally significant resources, while keeping the land in private management and in its historic agricultural use. Easements will ensure resource protection to the highest preservation standards.

Benefits will continue to be realized from the efforts of our partners. The Friends of Lindenwald demonstrated their role as our emissary by their recent gift of a bronze statue of Martin Van Buren to Kinderhook Village. The Open Space Institute created a protective envelope around Lindenwald by their purchase of 700 surrounding acres.. Roxbury Farm will perpetuate historic land use in an environmentally responsible way through organic farming and community-supported agriculture.

Fulfilling this vision would make Martin Van Buren National Historic Site a benchmark in its preservation of both historic and natural resources in a way that is responsive to the needs of its community. By perpetuating Lindenwald's historic land use patterns while interpreting the site's national historical significance, the National Park Service can demonstrate the value of stewardship of "the scenery and natural and historic objects," reasserting the meaning of the Organic Act for today's and tomorrow's audiences.

**Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager**

Dan Dattilio

Site: MAVA

STEWARDSHIP

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

All operations at Martin Van Buren National Historic Site are in temporary structures. The Centennial Initiative is occurring at the same time that we are starting our first General Management Plan (GMP) which will provide decisions for the locations and design of permanent facilities. This provides an opportune time to demonstrate excellence in park design, maintenance and visitor services when planning development of these structures. This may include a combination visitor center/administrative offices facility, a combination maintenance/collections storage facility, park trails, and other park facilities.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MAVA

STEWARDSHIP

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

Restore to good condition historic buildings associated with the diverse community of farm workers at Lindenwald, including the Gatehouses and the Farm Cottage, which is being offered as a donation by the Open Space Institute.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

Complete a Cultural Landscape Inventory for the Lindenwald Estate at Martin Van Buren National Historic Site. Update National Register documentation to reflect current research.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Reconstruct the North Gatehouse, originally built by Martin Van Buren, per the Secretary's Standards and the recommendation of the Cultural Landscape Plan.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MAVA

STEWARDSHIP

Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Protect historic core that was part of Martin Van Buren's original estate by acquiring high-priority land directly behind the President's house at Martin Van Buren National Historic site (this particular land is currently being offered as a donation by the Open Space Institute).

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MAVA

**ENVIRONMENT**

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

An adjustment to the boundary would provide visitor access to Van Buren's original farm which would include access to our partner, Roxbury Farm, a thousand member community supported agricultural association that is organic, thus providing opportunity to witness and encourage environmental conscience.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MAVA

**ENVIRONMENT**

Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

An adjustment to the boundary would provide visitor access to Van Buren's original farm which would include access to Roxbury Farm through an easement that the Open Space Institute would donate to the National Park Service. The easement includes identification of, and preservation methods for, original landscape characteristics traceable to Van Buren's tenure at Lindenwald. Having these experiences will provide the opportunity for our visitors to be engaged with a partner and their community in shared environmental stewardship.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MAVA

RECREATION

Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The 400 square foot visitor contact station at Martin Van Buren NHS, actually a shed like structure attached to the side of a rented trailer, greatly weakens our ability to expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations. Therefore, a high priority goal as the park begins its General Management Plan in 2007 will be the development of a combination visitor center-educational facility as one of the tools necessary to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives. One of our partners, the Friends of Lindenwald, has indicated a desire to participate in the Centennial Challenge in the development of adequate permanent facilities.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MAVA

RECREATION

Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

As mentioned above, a small shed like structure serves as our only visitor contact station. This weakens our ability to tie into a national tourism effort to attract visitors to this park and provides further reason why the development of a suitable visitor center will be a high priority in the GMP. An NPS modeling system that predicts increases to visitation based on park development forecasts a 33% increase in visitation with the development of a visitor center and other facilities. By 2016 more visitors, including diverse audiences and young people, will come to this lesser-known national park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MAVA

**EDUCATION**

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site will develop a vigorous educational outreach program. In the future a park ranger with professional educational experience will be hired. There will be collaborative efforts with community educational groups to develop high-quality park programs which complement curriculum based programs, available online or as base-placed educational opportunities at the park.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MAVA

**EDUCATION**

Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Martin Van Buren National Historic Site is on the brink of many changes which will provide new facilities and programs that will introduce young people and their families to national parks and thus promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: MAVA

**PROFESSIONALISM**

Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

As the Centennial Initiative begins so does our first General Management Plan (GMP), giving us extra incentive to plan right for the future and to use the GMP process to promote professionalism. At Martin Van Buren National Historic Site the GMP will be used to plan facilities that create an enjoyable, efficient and safe working environment for employees. There will be accommodations that support and expand opportunities for partners and volunteers resulting in fruitful and mutually beneficial working relationships. The future facilities here will instill a sense of pride in all who work here enabling them to perform at the highest levels of professionalism.

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